GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:367
ANSWERED ON:18.08.2003
ECO-SYSTEM IN LADAKH
M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether opening up of the high altitude wetlands in the Changthang region of Ladakh for tourism is disturbing the extremely fragile eco-system of the area, as reported by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature-India; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to safeguard the eco-system from further decay ?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) & (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 367 DUE REPLY ON 18TH AUGUST, 2003 REGARDING `ECO-SYSTEM IN LADAKH` BY DR. MANDA JAGANNATH

(a) & (b) : Opening of high altitude wetlands in the Changthang region for tourism has resulted in increase in vehicular traffic along the fringes of the wetlands. This seems to have affected the fragile eco-system of the region compelling larger animals to seek refuges away from disturbances. To preserve the natural habitat of Changthang region, an area of 4000 sq. kms has been declared as Changthang cold desert sanctuary under J & K Wildlife Protection Act, 1978.Three wetlands have been identified under National Wetland Conservation Programme for conservation and management, namely, Pangong Tsar, Tso Morari and Tisgul Tso -Tsokar. An amount of Rs. 26 lakhs for Tso Morari, Rs. 18.56 lakhs for Tso-Tsokar and Rs. 20 lakhs for Pangong Tso has been released for activities like fencing, watershed management, education awareness, protection, habitat improvement, etc. Tso Morari has also been declared as a Ramsar site of International Importance.